

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The label of Figure 1 has been amended to include the phrase "PRIOR ART."

The label of Figure 2 has been amended to include the phrase "PRIOR ART."

REMARKS

Applicants have, by the foregoing, cancelled claims 18-22 and 29-31, without prejudice, and amended claims 24 and 27. Accordingly, remaining in the application is independent claim 1 with its dependent claims 2-17; independent claim 23 with its dependent claims 24-28; and independent claim 32 with its dependent claim 33.

In the Claims

By the foregoing amendments, claims 18-22 and 29-31 have been cancelled without prejudice, and all rights are hereby reserved to pursue the subject matter of these claims in one or more related applications.

Claim 24 has been amended to more closely conform with the language recited in the specification. Claim 27 has been amended to correct an error in the claim language. These amendments are not being made for any reason related to patentability.

In the Drawings

Drawing figures 1 and 2 have been amended to include the phrase "PRIOR ART" under the figure number. As discussed in paragraphs [0011] and [0012], and again in paragraphs [0023] to [0026], the connector assembly shown in Figures 1 and 2 represents a conventional construction. Accordingly, drawing figures 1 and 2 have been amended to make reference to this prior art construction.

Election and Response to Restriction Requirement

In the above-mentioned Office Action, an election of a single disclosed species from 12 allegedly distinct species is required. In the event that no generic claim is allowed, the claims readable on the elected species will be prosecuted on the merits.

The Office Action indicates that the application contains the following distinct species:

Group I, Figures 1-4	Group VII, Figure 11
Group II, Figures 5-6	Group VIII, Figure 12
Group III, Figure 7	Group IX, Figure 13
Group IV, Figure 8	Group X, Figure 14
Group V, Figure 9	Group XI, Figure 15
Group VI, Figure 10	Group XII, Figure 16

In view of the foregoing amendments and discussion regarding Figures 1 and 2, it is respectfully submitted Group I should not include Figures 1 and 2.

Responsive to the requirement that one alleged species be elected, Applicants hereby elect the embodiment in Figures 5 and 6 (Group II) for prosecution on the merits.

The Office Action indicates that a listing of claims readable on the elected species must also be provided. Accordingly, Applicants state that claims 1-8, 19-14, 23-25, 27, 28, 32 and 33 are readable on the species embodied in Group II, Figures 5 and 6.

Additionally, independent claims 1 and 32, as originally presented, read upon at least Groups I, II, III, IV, VIII, IX, X, XI and XII, and are generic with regard to at least these species. Independent claim 23 reads upon at least Groups I, II, XI and XII, and is generic with regard to at least these species. Thus, should any one or more of these independent claims (or any newly presented generic claims) be or remain generic at allowance, all claims dependent therefrom, whether or not directed to the elected species, should also be allowed.

Furthermore, Applicants hereby reserved all rights to pursue claims to any and all non-elected or non-allowed subject matter in one or more related applications.

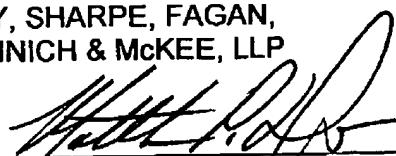
CONCLUSION

It is respectfully submitted that the foregoing amendments, election and discussion are fully responsive to the latest Office Action. Reconsideration of the claims, as amended, and an early notice of allowability are earnestly solicited.

Alternatively, in the interests of compact prosecution and advancing this application to issue, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner telephone the undersigned to discuss any of the foregoing and/or to make any suggestions that the Examiner may have to place the case in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appln. No. 10/809,160
Amtd. Dated October 27, 2005
Reply to Office Action of September 28, 2005
Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

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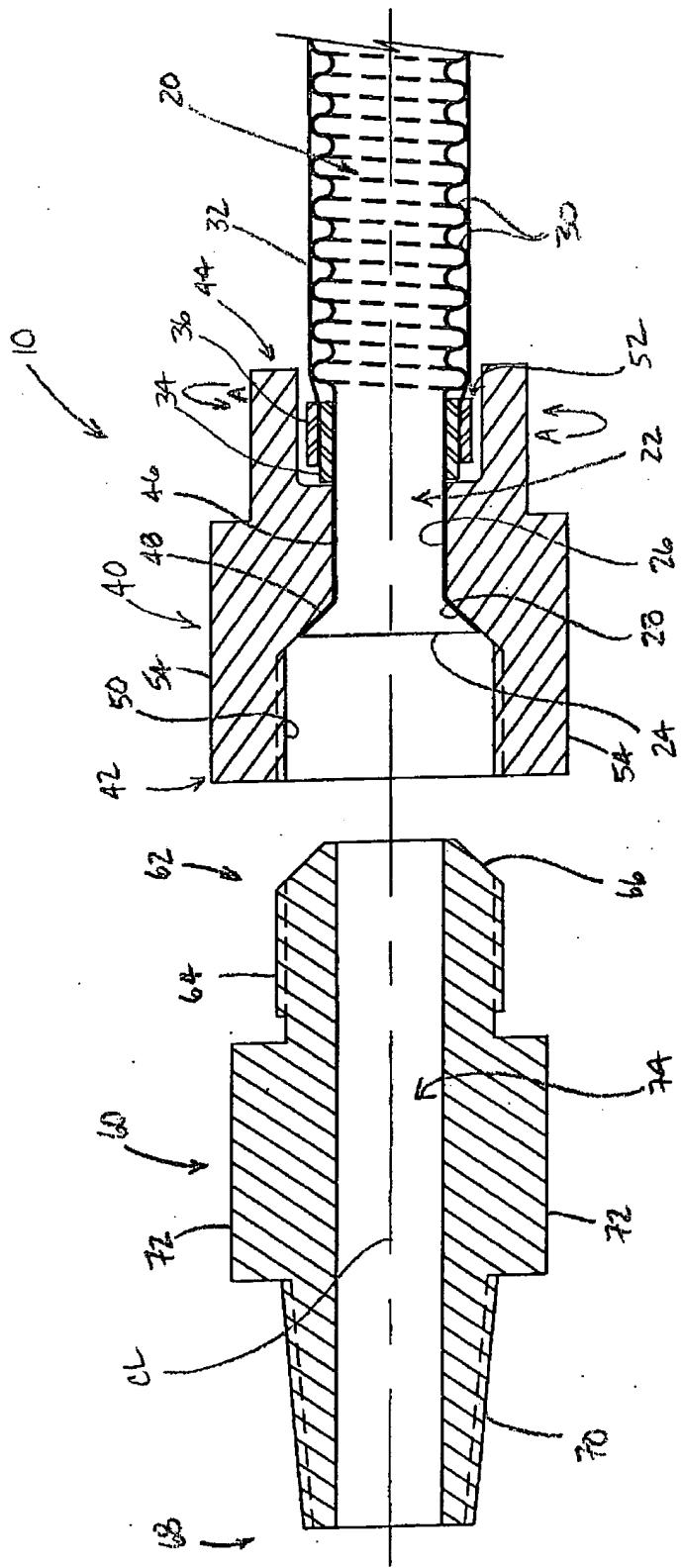


FIGURE 1 ADDED LABEL
Prior Art

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